But, you should have asked on the earlier one ...(*Interruptions*)... That is right, but what did you do for 15—20 minutes? ...(*Interruptions*)... In this way one question will require one hour ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI YERRA NARAYANA SWAMY: Sir, this is a burning issue in Andhra Pradesh.

SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI: Anyway, they have repeatedly asked ...(*Interruptions*)... It is under active consideration and, as I said before, this cannot come up by itself because I have to bring it before the Parliament. Therefore, it will come up when everybody else's case is decided. So, we have referred it to the National Commission for SC/STs, and they have not given any decision on this yet.

श्री जगन्नाथ मिश्र: सभापति जी, प्रश्न के खंड "ख" के संबंध में मैं मंत्री महोदया से जानना चाहूंगा कि क्या यह बात सही है कि केन्द्र सरकार की ओर से अनुसूचित जाति और जनजाति के लिए जो सहायता राशि दी जाती है, उसकी कोई सही मानिटरिंग केन्द्रीय स्तर पर नहीं होती है और जिसके कारण से राज्य सरकारें उस धनराशि का समुचित उपयोग नहीं करती हैं? उदाहरण के लिए बिहार में पिछले पांच-छह साल में जो धनराशि ट्राइबल सब-प्लान के लिए और कंपोनेंट प्लान के लिए भारत परकार की ओर से दी गई है, उसका कोई हिसाब-किताब वहां नहीं है।

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Misra, this does not arise out of this question ...(*Interruptions*)... When Mr. Kaushik was saying, he was right ...(*Interruptions*)... This question does not arise out of the present question.

श्री जगन्नाथ मिश्र: सर, मेरा सवाल इसमें केवल इतना है कि प्रगति क्यों नहीं हुई?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no. ...(*Interruptions*)... Mr. Kaushik was right... No, it does not arise out of it ...(*Interruptions*)... Now, Mr. Kaushik. Mr. Kaushik, I hope you will put a proper supplementary.

श्री रमा शंकर कौशिक: श्रीमन्, मैं बिल्कुल इसी पर प्रश्न करूंगा, जैसा कि माननीय मंत्री जी ने जवाब दिया, उसमें उन्होंने बताया कि शैड्यूल्ड कास्ट और शैड्यूल्ड ट्राइब्ज के लोगों के लिए जो आरक्षण की व्यवस्था है, वह एक बहुत बड़ा पहलू है, एक बहुत बड़ा हिस्सा है इस बात का, कि उनका विकास कैसे हो, लेकिन यह भी एक हकीकत है कि उनमें भी एक ऐसा क्लास पैदा हो गया है, जो आरक्षण का पूरा फायदा वही उठाकर ले जाता है। मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहता हूं कि जैसे सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने विभिन प्रदेशों को यह आदेश दिए हैं कि पिछड़े वर्ग के आरक्षण में क्रीमी-लेयर वाला मामला जरूर रखा जाए, उसी प्रकार से आरक्षण का लाभ नीचे तक के लोगों को मिल पाए और केवल चंद लोग ही इसका फायदा न उठा पाएं, ऐसी कोई व्यवस्था करने पर क्या सरकार विचार करेगी?

SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI: While it is easily said that the creamy layer exists and it does exist, it is difficult to identify on the basis of a single petition whether a person is deserving or not. The best thing that we can do to make sure that the creamy layer expands downwards — so that everybody is able to avail of it — is to expand educational services. The Ministry has increased the amount of money. We have put aside several hundred crores of rupees so that we can put more into schools for SC/STs into book banks, into mobile libraries, into tutorial centres which enable them to get into services.

श्री रमा शंकर कौशिक: सभापति जी, मेरे प्रश्न का उत्तर नहीं है।

MR. CHAIRMAN: Neither was your question relevant nor is the reply relevant. We shall take up the next question. Question No. 463, Shri Bangaru Laxman.

Credit Rate under DEPB Scheme

*463. SHRI BANGARU LAXMAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the credit rate under DEPB Scheme was revised, recently, for dyed and printed fabric/saree made from polyester yarn and fabric/saree made from mixed Man-made Filament Yarn/Spun Yarn;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the exporters and their associations opposed the revised rate with value cap for DEPB entitlement;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the action taken or proposed to be taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

The Duty Entitlement Pass Book (DEPB) Scheme was introduced in the EXIM Policy w.e.f. 1.4.1997. Under this scheme duty credit is allowed on the basis of a fixed percentage of the FOB value of exports. The credit rates have been notified for over 1800 export items as of now. The Inter-Ministerial Committee known as DEPB Committee fixes the DEPB rates for various items taking into account the data furnished by various Trade Organisations, Export Promotion Councils, Individual exporters relating to the CIF value of various input items which are imported as also the FOB value of the export items.

After the DEPB Scheme remained in operation for some months, it was decided to review some aspects of the said scheme so as to provide some safeguards against grant of excess credit through over-invoicing of export products. One of the revised parameters that was considered after the review was that in respect of DEPB rates of 15% and above the DEPB Committee shall examine the desirability of prescribing appropriate value cap which would act as a ceiling for grant of DEPB credit for various export products.

In the case of Dyed and/or Dyed and Printed Fabrics/Sarees made from 100% Polyster Filament Yarn or from mixed man-made Filament Yarn/Spun Yarn, the DEPB Committee had fixed a rate of 17%.

The credit rates under the DEPB Scheme for Dyed and/or Dyed and Printed Fabrics/Sarees made from 100% Polyester Filament Yarn has been revised from 17% to 19% with a value cap of Rs. 190/Kg. w.e.f. 15.4.1998. Credit rate under DEPB Scheme for Fabrics/Sarees made out of mixed man made Filament Yarn/Spun Yarn was revised from 17% to 16% with a value cap of Rs. 300/Kg. w.e.f. 15.4.1998. For fixing above value caps, DEPB Committee had taken into account the data utilised by the Deptt. of Revenue for fixing the All Industry rates of Duty Drawback.

Many exporters including the Synthetic and Rayon Export Promotion Council, Mumbai had opposed the revised rate with low value cap for the DEPB entitlement. These representations were duly examined by the DEPB Committee and a hearing was given to the representatives of the Export Promotion Council. On the basis of these representations and the fresh data furnished by the Council, the value cap for Dyed and/or Dyed and Printed Fabrics/Sarees made from 100% Polyester Filament Yarn was revised from Rs. 190/ Kg. to Rs. 300/Kg. w.e.f. 18.6.1998.

SHRI BANGARU LAXMAN: I am thankful to the Minister that he has....

SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE: I am sure that the hon. Member is completely satisfied with my answer because we have met all the demands.

SHRI BANGARU LAXMAN: I am thankful to the Minister that he has incorporated that. After the formation of the question, the rate was again revised. On 18.6.1998, the value cap for dyed and printed fabrics/sarees was revised. Sir, with this again, the question of controversies regarding the DEPB, that is, the Duty Entitlement Pass Book Scheme still remains a subject of debate. There were 4,400 items whose rates were to be finalised last year. In the month of April, the Government announced 360 items in the Open General Licence and then took this list to about 1700 items. Still there are 2,700 items. Still the rates are to be decided under this DEPB Scheme. When does the Government

propose to complete this? It has been seen that whenever there is a meeting with the WTO, the Government tries to rush through this. Is this the situation under which the Government proposes to complete these items? Then, Sir, the Government has also been saying that this DEPB Scheme is being opposed by the WTO. Is it a fact that this Scheme is being opposed by the WTO? If it is a fact, then what does the Government propose to do?

SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE: Sir, the question relates to the DEPB rates in regard to specific commodities. I have given an answer and the hon. Member is satisfied. If there are any more questions regarding other items, let him put another question; I will certainly answer.

SHRI BANGARU LAXMAN: This is a related matter.

SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE: How is it related to WTO?

The demand was met and you must appreciate that.

The hon. Member must appreciate. He should say, at least, 'thank you', for quickly responding. *(Interruptions.)*

SHRI BANGARU LAXMAN: I thanked the Minister at the beginning itself. I only said that still, the question was being debated. There are so many items.....

SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE: It is a matter which has to be continuously considered. We have repeatedly said in the past that we are not going to be dictated by the WTO and that we will take our decision, in the interest of our country. There are several other items. I would like to inform the hon. Member that the whole scheme is being revamped. I want to integrate all these export promotion schemes and bring them under one umbrella, if possible.

SHRI BANGARU LAXMAN: I again thank the hon. Minister. Though it was not a specific question, but was only a general question which I had raised, he has answered it. But I would like to seek some more clarifications from him because a lot of debate is being raised.

Sir, our exports have shown a decline. Normally, it is being attributed to the conditions imposed by the WTO. It is being said that because of the conditionalities put forth by the WTO, our exports are going down. This may not be a fact. Recently, the EXIM Policy was announced. It has been said that though this Government speaks of *Swadeshi,* by announcing the EXIM Policy, it has again subjected itself to the conditions of the WTO. If there are certain conditions, I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to what are the conditions. If these conditions run counter to the safeguards our exporters have been enjoying, what action the Government propose to take to protect the interests of the exporters?

SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEDGE: Sir, no additional conditions have been imposed by the WTO. But there is a provision to impose antidumping duty in cases where there is dumping; also where there is a case of dumping at a rate which is less than the domestic rate; and, thirdly, such dumping should hurt the local industry. Excepting these, there are no other conditions.

I would like to point out to the hon. Member that we have accepted willingly to join the WTO and there is no question of reconsidering that. It is not — I may add — in the interest of the country.

The decision as to how many items should be included will be taken in the next one or two years.

Export of Cotton, Sugar and Wheat Products

*464. SHRI S. NIRAIKULATHAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that cotton, sugar and wheat products could not be exported due to shortage during the last year: